PARIS.

Probably the Most Interesting City in The World.

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Most educated Americans at one time or another treasure the hope or ambition of visiting Paris, so large a a place does this beautiful and magnificent city occupy in the imagination of the ordinary individual. The writer has been able this year to join the vast army of American tourists who annually visit Europe, and while gratifying his long-nourished desire to see this gay capital of the French, it has occurred to him that a few notes and impressions on the city as it appears to him may be of interest to others who have yet to experience the delightful gratification of this long-wished for event.

To an American at any rate Paris is probably the most interesting city in the world. Every one who has lived here for any time has felt its spell grow upon him and even the visitor who has been here only for a short period knows something of its indescribable charm. It has many magnificent buildings and the grandest streets and "places" in the world, but it is not by the splendor of its architectural features alone that it attracts its tens of thousands of votaries. Paris has been called "the most comfortable place in the world, as well as the gayest," and herein, perhaps, lies a hint of its secret. Full of beauty and magnificence everywhere, of innumerable picturesque spots, with storied memories at every turn, it seems to fascinate, apart from its comfort and its gaiety, by the vivid human interest of its very stones. Here in Paris, face to face with the thing and place of his imagination—here in the very heart of the city, he feels the witchery, the glamour and seductiveness of its streets.

Paris is Paris; there is no other description of it. Mirabeau once said, "Paris is a sphinx, I will drag her secret from her," but in this neither he nor any other man has succeeded. Readers of this article will look in vain for any reading of the riddle of the sphinx. The sphinx will not give away her secret to a mere medical man on a holiday trip—nor does this medico believe that the brilliant Watterson in his recent and widely-heralded visit was able to wrest away this mystery of the city.

In describing Paris no one attempts to draw comparisons. New York, London and Berlin are useless for that purpose—no country throughout the world boasts of a city which is adequate for purposes of comparison. I do not believe that the visitor to Paris ever thinks of drawing a comparison between it and any other city—he is too overcome by its palpable charm and beauty to think of dull contrasts. He might wish for more ice water, for less wine, for better cigars and for the more frequent sound of the English tongue, but for nothing more in Paris. "If comparisons be odious," what then of the city? To these American eyes Paris looks singularly young and new. This, of course, is a wrong impression, not only as to the actual buildings of the city, but especially as to its history, and spirit. The mind at first wonders at this impression, but the reason is that Paris has never been checked in its development, which, in spite of the blood and turmoil of revolutions and wars, has proceeded slowly, but steadily and always artistically. In vain, with Baedeker in hand, you seek for relics and find them not, because the city has now felt old age and that kind of forgetfulness which is necessary to the preservation of old things untouched has never fallen upon her. The spirit of Paris is eternally youthful—a spirit of gaiety pervades the air—and even to the tourist of phlegmatic temperament and solid mind, this atmosphere of joy and mirth is infectious, entrancing. Most cities of the world are dull, morose and sullen compared with Paris. The appearance of the streets and the sparkling beauty of the shop windows drive away anything approaching dullness. There is no place for brooding care in this city. It all may be heartless and even ungodly, but the gaiety is here and the most morose soon finds his dull soul partaking of the levity and sprightliness which is in the air and all around him. The exhilaration produced by the wide and brilliantly illuminated streets, the striking avenues of trees interspersed with the cafes and gaily painted kiosques, between which flows an unceasing stream of elegant carriages fleeting automobiles and clanging omnibus—the bright looking houses, all of uniform height, five stories, and the lively, chattering crowds, are irresistible. The very atmosphere has the specific of champagne—and there are no headaches in Paris.

Apart from this gaiety which is a distinct feature of Parisian life, the city has thousands of other attractions. In itself, the city—a veritable microcism of imposing buildings, both ancient and modern, beautiful churches, picture galleries and museums unsurpassed, squares and statutes—does not offer any scope for further development. Its history alone would make Paris interesting, for it is one of the most historic cities of Europe. It is one of the oldest of European cities, and it has been the scene of tremendous and overwhelming disturbances, more varied and more revolutionary than those of any other city in the world, with the possible exception of Rome. This fair, gay, thoughtless and youthful looking city has been subjected to at least a dozen investments and many invasions, culminating in 1870-71 in by far the greatest siege of modern times when the Germans so ruthlessly overwhelmed it. All this throws a glamour over the place. Rebellion, appalling massacre and revolution, battles, sieges and capture were frequent incidents in the long history of Paris from the days of the ancient Romans and of the Franks to the days of the German empire and of the bloody Commune. But in this orderly city of today the visitor sees no vestiges of these mighty upheavals which not only wrought changes in the history of the old world, but made their impress on the destinies of the new.

It is hard to realize that on the splendid metropolis where life flows so gaily along there was shed the blood of some 10,000 victims of the revolution, from Louis XVI and his ill-fated queen to Madame Roland and Charlotte Corday, and that every bright terrace, every bridge and every town has echoed with the roar of cannon and musketry, the horrid shouts and screams of battles and murder, not once or twice, but back through the stormy times of the revolution, St. Bartholomew, the civil wars, the English conquests, feudal faction fights, the courts of Paris, the Franks, Gauls and Romans.

Little is there to remind the visitor that it was the noble Place de la Concorde that the frightful suggestion of a French physician, the guillotine, began its awful work, and was busy so long, and around it sat the women of Paris knitting away as the heads of the hated nobility fell into baskets and were carried away or else cruelly displayed on spikes about the city. This magnificent place—the square of awful memories—is admitted to be the finest site in Europe. Not only does its size and its magnificent adornment, but the grand views which it commands from every part, fully entitle it to rank as the finest square on the continent. No city of the world can boast of such an architectural scheme as is afforded by the Place de la Concorde and its surroundings. In the center of town is the great obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle. Two noble founts at the foot of the obelisk were dedicated to the rivers and seas of France. Upon lofty pedestals around the Place rise eight allegorical groups and statuary representing the chief towns and provinces of France, and they are splendid specimens of art and on a large scale. The statuary representing the lost Alsace and Loraine never lacks for lovers and other emblems of mourning and appeals with a melancholy interest to strangers who love the later history and valor of the French. Bordering on the gardens of the Tuilleries is the immense square of awful memories—its title of Place de la Concorde affords a curious and striking irony of nomenclature. This peaceful name, bestowed upon it by Louis Phillippe in 1830, scarcely serves to obscure the terrible associations of this Golgotha of France from only the most ignorant and frivolous of visitors. Who can forget that there in the space of two years was shed the blood of thousands of victims of the ghastly revolution? And who can forget that it was here on this spot that the lovely queen, Marie Antoinette, who deserved a better fate, became a victim of the bloody delirium that had seized the people and expiated with her young life the terrible faults of the French aristocracy?

This awful history suggests monuments, and Paris is full of them. In spite of the drawbacks which arise from an insufficient acquaintance with a foreign language, you can learn more of French history from the monuments of Paris during a tour that you can cram into a child's brain in an ordinary school education. And the monuments are the most imposing and beautiful in the world, and like its monuments the streets of Paris are remarkable. No country seems to know how to lay out its streets like France. It is not too much to say that the streets of Paris come as a distinct revelation to those of us familiar only with the mean streets of American cities. Scotland boasts of Princess street, Edinburgh, and fine though it is, it pales into insignificance when compared with the Champs Elysees. This is the most magnificent modern street of all European capitals. It is a broad, wood-paved thoroughfare, on each side of which are rows of beautiful elms and limes which form leafy avenues and hide the cafes chantants, which are such an agreeable addition to this world-famed promenade. But the taste with which it has been laid out and the grand proportions of this magnificent thoroughfare are not its chief attractions. At the summit of the gentle slope stands the Arc de Triomphe, the finest monument of the kind in the world. It was designed for Napoleon I after the battle of Austerlitz, and on its massive walls are groups of statuary carved in high relief and of gigantic proportions. They commemorate the mighty battles fought by the first emperor, the names of which are carved on the walls and they form a goodly number. The guides will explain to you that "Waterloo" was not put on because the French alphabet does not boast of a letter W. The arch towers conspicuously above most of the buildings in the city, being 160 feet high, 146 feet broad and cost $2,000,000. Beautifully situated on one side of the promenade is seen the palatial marble mansion which the Gould dollars are building for the Count and Countess Castellane.

I have but touched the shadow of the fringe of what Paris has to offer to the visitor who comes here with an intelligent estimate of the life and character of the place.

It is not for me to give a catalogue of the wonderful buildings, each of which could occupy the time of the visitor for a whole day. There is the Louvre, that vast treasure house of art: the Madelieine, modeled after the Parthenon of Athens and intended by Napoleon as a temple of victory, now the church of St. Magdalene; the great cathedral of Notre Dame whose history is the history of Paris; the Hotel des Invalides, beneath whose gilded dome stands the colossal sarcophagus of red Siberian porphyry, containing the remains of the great Napoleon; the Trocadero, the Pantheon, memorial temple of the illustrious dead; the Place de la Bastille; the Grand Opera, the largest and handsomest theatre in the world; the Eiffel Tower, the loftiest structure made by man; the grand boulevards—all these are but suggestions of the many historic buildings in this grand and entertaining city.

So much for the city, but how about the people? Perhaps you never realize what the word foreigner means until you land on French soil, and it dawns upon you that all the jibbering crowd of strange-tongued men and women regard you as a foreigner. Your language, your dress, your face, your manner, proclaims the fact that you are of another race, and the moment you speak they are silent and puzzled to catch the strange sound of your language. But Paris is hospitable to the stranger within her gates and you don't feel lonely. What you have read of the politeness of the Frenchman is all true. The street gamins can give you points in manners, but I must say that this world-famed politeness of the French is not so agreeable to the stranger as the straight-forward courtesy and manliness of the English—it is of superficial quality and has a note of insincerity which to me, at least, is distasteful. But you feel rough, uncouth, even in your best clothes and on your best behaviour, compared with the ease and grace and this sprightly politeness which is part of the individuality of a Frenchman. But you need have no fear, even if you are ignorant of every word of the language. You can stand in Cook's office and hear almost every language of the earth. Paris is cosmopolitan, Americans are here by the thousand—the student voice of Yankeedom is heard everywhere and representatives of every nationality of the world may be seen on the streets. Paris attracts tourists of all nations, for it is the world's pleasure city. It is said that this year the number of American visitors to the French capital beats the record. Season after season the American rush has been approaching the stage at which it will be said that the Americans are first and the rest nowhere. Just now Uncle Sam is seen everywhere. Uncle Sam is popular, rather more popular, on the whole, I am bound to add, than his wife and his lady relatives. The reason is, I am told, that Uncle Sam is more prodigal of his dollars than is Mrs. Sam. In this matter Uncle Sam is the very pink of generosity. When he comes to Paris—and when he doesn't come—he makes up his mind that his wife and children shall have a good time, cost what it may.

Those well qualified to judge assert that no less than 100,000 Americans visit France every summer; and a French banker recently came forward with the estimate, reached after careful investigation, that the American tourists spend no less than four hundred millions annually in Europe, and that a large part of this amount is spent in Paris. Great as this amount is, it is not surprising when it is considered that Americans flock to Europe from all parts of the United States, just as the good Muhammadan makes at least once in his life a pilgrimage to Mecca. They come from the north, the south, the east and the west; from cities and from more remote places where the pater familias puts aside for years part of his savings that he may take his family to this ultima thule—Europe.

No account of Paris would be complete without some mention of the women of Paris—les Parisiennes. Their beauty, their indefinable style and chic appearance are world-renowned, and surely they deserve it and more. No where in the world may one see such striking and beautiful costumes, and worn with so much grace and vivaciousness. There are no dowdy or poorly-dressed women in Paris, and here the poor masculine mind at last understands why it is that this city is considered fons et origo of feminine fashions. The writer is not considered to be among the most impressionable or susceptible of his sex, but he does think that these sprightly and beautifully gowned women of Paris add not a little to the charm and attractiveness of the gay capital.

Growing Reluctance to Wed.

Statistics show that there is a great decline in the marriage rate. Such are the facts and figures, about which there can be no disputing. It is when we come to the reasons for their being what they are that we tread on debatable ground. Various persons have different theories to account for the growing reluctance to enter the bonds of matrimony.

One thinker, Dr. John Pollen, an Anglo-Indian official, of great and varied experience of men and things, says that it is the undue education of women on masculine lines that militates against matrimony, and that such training is to be deplored. On the other hand, Mrs. Perkins Gilman, an American lecturer, contends that woman should do less housework, and by developing her mind become a more worthy partner of man, to the great benefit of the world.

In this controversy there is as usual some truth on both sides; and the solution of the difficulty lies in frankly recognizing that fact, and endeavoring to reconcile the apparently conflicting claims.

Women should be educated in mind, body and soul. It is the want of education in the past that has led to the demand for over-education now. It is not necessarily that woman is inferior to man, but different. The functions of each are different; and that individual is the best that best fulfills the law of being, whether man or woman, husband or wife, father or mother.

There cannot be one standard of duty or perfection for the two sexes, and it is comparing the one with the other that the conflicting schools of education both go wrong. A woman should not be trained to become a mannish woman, but a womanly woman. Whatever she helps her to become most herself—the nearest to the ideal of a perfect woman—that is the best for her.

In a complex civilization such as ours, there is room for professional women as well as domestic women, and lady doctors, teachers, inspectors and possibly barristers; all have an important part to play, especially in looking after the interests of their sex. But the great function, the true vocation, of women is now, as in the beginning, to be a helpmeet for man, to be the mother and trainer of the children who will be men and women of the future. Men will be forced to realize and respect her position, and will deem it an even greater honor to seek her alliance in matrimony; and from the mutual respect and appreciation of man and wife, will spring the greater happiness of the race.—Boston Herald.

Fickleness of Woman.

Gray—"Hello, Smith, old boy! And so you are married, eh?"

Smith—"That's what the parson told me."

Gray—"And, of course, you are happy?"

Smith—"Well, I don't know about that. To tell the plain, unvarnished truth, I'm just a little bit disappointed."

Gray—"I'm sorry to hear that. What's the trouble?"

Smith—"Well, you see, during the courtship stunt she used to tell me how strenuously she loved me, but we had no sooner got spliced than she gave up her $10 a week job as a typewriter thumper. That goes to show how much you can bank on a woman's love."

— Beware of the man who depreciates himself and makes light of his abilities.

A TOWN OF FOOLS.

Life in Gheel, Where Belgium's Lunatics Are Sheltered.

Gheel is the name of a little town near Antwerp, where the demented are cared for by the Belgian government. It is literally a town of fools, a town where fools dwell in peace with each other, stroll about the streets and take their noonday refreshments at the cafes. The township shelters about 1,500 lunatics, who are taken as lodgers by the townsfolk, though all the dangerous cases are passed on to outlying villages or confined in the asylum, Gheel harboring only the harmless. The treatment of the patients is but a moral one, cures being due to the kindness and tact of the townsfolk. The fees for taking in the "innocents," as they are called, vary from $60 to $600 a year, according to the degree of luxury in which the patient is kept. No matter how much he pays, however, he is the spoiled one of the family, for the people of Gheel are said to understand the management of insane people better than any other known community or institution. This is due to hundreds of years of experience handed down from father to son.

Each patient is really the guest of the house. He is given the armchair and the best seat at table and enjoys the most attention, so that he grows to value the esteem in which he is held to such an extent that he will make the greatest efforts to master his disease lest he should forfeit his privileges. The children of Gheel seem wiser than others, from their contact with their elders in years, though their equals in brains. Dozens of children may be seen walking about hand in hand with great robust men, to whom they chatter in the most familiar manner. In fact, the boarder patient is often told off to take care of the baby of the household, and in most cases he makes an excellent nurse.

Gheel goes ahead of any other city as a residence for "emperors," "kings," "queens," "millionaires," "popes," "archbishops," "pashas," all of whom are fully honored and given full license for their fancies. One "king" informs all newcomers that he has two left legs and is obliged to have his boots and trousers made accordingly. Another old gentleman who thinks himself the pope of Rome says he is perfectly able to fly to heaven, but that for the moment he is too fat. His landlord offers to assist him in making a start from the second floor window, whereupon the "pope" thinks better of his project and prefers to wait until "after tea."—Chicago News.

Webster's Bill That Grew.

Daniel Webster was never noted for attention to detail in business matters. His well known failings were often taken advantage of by unscrupulous creditors, who gave no receipt for paid bills, simply because they were not demanded. Webster was well aware of this, but it seemed to trouble him very little.

On one occasion a creditor presented a bill which seemed familiar, and Webster asked, "Isn't this bill pretty large?"

"I think not," replied the maker of it confidently.

"Well," said Webster, handing over the money, "every time I have paid that bill it has seemed to me a trifle larger."

A Quick Game.

A story is told of an actor who was returning home rather early in the morning and came to an early organ grinder. A piece of green baize was stretched over the top of the organ, while a miserable monkey gathered in any receipts. The actor saw the green cloth, stopped and put down a silver dollar, which was immediately grabbed by the monkey. The actor stared a minute, rubbed his eyes and walked away muttering:

"Quickest game I ever ran up against in all my life."

Unchanged.

"Yes," says the advanced farmer, who really should be called an agriculturist, "there has been a vast change in the methods of those who till the soil. As an instance, nowadays we have machines that cut, thrash and sack the wheat, whereas in other years we cradled it."

The visitor nods understandingly, but says:

"Yet I believe there has not been such great progress in other branches of agriculture. Am I not right in my opinion that you still put corn in a crib?"

A Real Conversion.

Mr. Spurgeon used to tell the following story of the conversion of a servant girl. When she was asked, "Are you converted?" she replied, "I hope so, sir."

"What makes you think you are?"

"Well, sir, there is a great change in me from what there used to be."

"What is the change?"

"I don't know, sir, but there is a change in all things. But there is one thing, I always sweep under the mats now."

— The top notch of sentiment is gained more easily than the lowest step of service.

— There is more of the divine in a little diligence than in all the dignity in creation.

— When religion is only a thing it is worse than nothing.